THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The afforestation work done by the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has been nationally recognized and the Plant was awarded the Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award in1991.

(c) and (d) All the National Steel Plants have drawn up short-term and long-term Environmental Management Plans for pollution abatement and creation of good work environment.

National Green Corps

4706. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have started a new scheme of National Green Corps;

(b) if so, what is the progress of the scheme so far; and

(c) what is the response to the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Government decided to intensify the Eco-clubs programme to raise the National Green Corps, covering at least 100 schools in each district of the country. While the Governments of all the States and Union Territories responded positively to implement the intensified programme, funds to the extent of Rs. 5.57 crores were sanctioned during 2001-02 to 31 States and Union Territories for setting up of Eco-clubs, for teachers' training and resource material.

Encroachment of forest lands by non-tribal in Kerala

4707. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have received any report regarding encroachment of forest lands in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have asked for any report from Kerala Government regarding the reported encroachment of vested forest in

the State by non-tribals, with the help of revenue officers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of Kerala has informed that un-authorised allotment of forest land to some tribal families has been made in Mathikettan of Idukki area.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government of Kerala has appointed a Committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary with the Revenue Secretary and Forest Secretary as members to oversee the eviction of all encroachers from the area. Also, one man Commission (Additional Chief Secretary to State Government) has been appointed by the State Government to go into all the aspects of the illegal occupation and to ascertain if there are any lapses on the part of the Government Officials.

Encroachment of forest land at Mathikettan

4708. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that virgin forest and forest land at Mathikettan in Idukki Dist. in Kerala, was massively destructed by the encroachers;

(b) whether there has been any violation of Environment Protection Act of 1986 and Forest Conservation Act of 1980 in the massive land grab here;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(d) whether Kerala Government has initiated any action to evict encroachers from the forest land; and

(e) whether the State Government has made any lapse in conserving the forest land; if so, the details thereof?